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ABSTRACT

Recent evidence indicates that masculine and feminine personality attributes have only minimal associations with many kinds of sex role preferences, behaviors and attitudes, and that both masculine and feminine traits are positively associated with valued characteristics. This study investigated the measurement of some socially undesirable traits--eight which are generally considered to be masculine and eight which are feminine. Undergraduates were administered both positive and negative scales, as well as a measure of self esteem and interpersonal competence. Subjects also reported on their experiences in two areas of problem behaviors--emotional/neurotic, and acting out (drugs, cheating, fighting). Conclusions included the following: (1) the lack of correlation between positive and negative scales indicated that they measured unique aspects of masculinity and femininity; (2) the negative scales were related to negative self esteem, and positive scales were related to positive self esteem; (3) the best predictor of neuroticism was low incidence of desirable masculine characteristics; (4) the best discriminator between high- and low-acting out was high incidence of undesirable masculine traits; and (5) undesirable feminine traits were associated with both types of behavior problems. (A list of the 16 traits is included). (GDC)

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Negative Masculinity and Femininity:

Neuroticism and Acting Out

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The traditional psychometric approach to masculinity and femininity has been to treat these constructs as both bipolar and unidimensional. Thus, tests of masculinity and femininity were set up as a single continuum, with extreme masculinity at one end and extreme femininity at the other. Further, M-F tests often included heterogeneous content--items referring to personality traits, role relationships, occupational and avocational preferences, etc. Or, if they contained a more limited type of content, such as personality characteristics, their results were treated as if they could be generalized to other categories of gender-related phenomena. Recent evidence has challenged both of these assumptions. The present investigators, for example, have pointed to mounting evidence that, typically, masculine and feminine personality attributes have only minimal associations with many kinds of sex-role preferences, behaviors, and attitudes. This distinction between traits and roles is critical to this paper since the investigation we report is limited to masculine and feminine personality characteristics and our findings may be of limited value in understanding sex-role preferences and attitudes. (In this connection, the irony of being assigned to a paper session with "sex roles" in the title has not escaped us.)

As far as the bipolar assumption is concerned, research by Bem with the BSRI and by ourselves and our colleagues with the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (or PAQ) has isolated separate clusters of masculine and

feminine personality characteristics and has shown them to be essentially orthogonal rather than highly and negatively correlated. Studies with the PAQ, and to some extent, the BSRI have further demonstrated that masculine and feminine traits are both positively associated with a number of valued characteristics such as self-esteem and social effectiveness, without regard to subjects' sex.

The PAQ M and F scales, with which this paper is concerned, have two properties which it is critical to mention at this point. The M scale contains items which may be described as goal-oriented, instrumental traits, or as David Bakan has described them, agentic characteristics. The F scale, on the other hand, contains people-oriented, expressive traits. Or in Bakan's terms, traits reflecting a sense of communion or selflessness. Secondly, all traits on both scales have been judged to be socially desirable in both sexes.

What I will report to you today are the results of our attempts to measure some socially undesirable components of agency and communion. On the basis of pilot work we identified a number of masculine trait items that have the following characteristics: (1st) they are stereotypically more typical of men than women; (2nd) they are socially undesirable for both sexes, i.e., mean ratings of the ideal man and the ideal woman each fell toward the pole indicating absence of the characteristics; (3rd) they are agentic or instrumental in nature. We were thus seeking items that were conceptually parallel in content to the original M scale, not merely undesirable attributes. Of the items meeting all three criteria, 8 were chosen for the negative or M^- scale. (Eight items were chosen to match the number on the original positive M or M^+ scale.) These items may be seen in the first slide.

Slide 1

A number of undesirable traits that were stereotypically feminine were also identified but none seemed fully satisfactory as definitions of negative communion or selflessness. We selected instead two sets of four undesirable feminine items because of their theoretical interest. The first set comes close to communion and is labeled F^- sub C. The second set describes traits reflecting verbal passive-aggressiveness and is labeled F^- sub VA. The items on each of the two resulting F^- scales are shown at the right in the first slide.

The extended PAQ (or EPAQ) containing both positive and negative scales was administered to 229 male and 363 female students in introductory psychology. A second instrument in the test battery was the Texas Social Behavior Inventory, a measure of social competence and self-esteem. Comparison of the means for men and women revealed self-report differences in predicted directions on all EPAQ scales: Men scored significantly higher than the women on M^+ and M^- and lower on F^+ and the two F^- scales.

Slide 2

The next slide shows the correlations among the EPAQ measures. Note first that the parallel correlations in the two sexes were quite similar in value. Second, I will call your attention to the correlations between the M^+ and F^+ scales. As is usual, these are positive but low in value. The correlations between the parallel desirable and undesirable scales are also low and in only two instances significant. For M^+ and M^- the values

are .12 and .10 for males and females respectively. For F^+ , the correlations with F_C^- were both positive (.08 and .15) but with F_{VA}^- , both were negative (-.09 and -.14). The signs are theoretically reasonable, but what is critical is their miniscule size.

However, higher correlations--which were negative in direction--were obtained between opposite-typed positive and negative scales. The r 's between M^- and F^+ are -.33 and -.47 for males and females, respectively. The values for the F^- scales and M^+ vary from -.28 to -.38. This pattern of relationships--very low correlations between parallel positive and negative scales and stronger correlations between positive and negative scales across sex-types--points to the importance of distinguishing between the socially desirable and undesirable components of instrumentality and of expressiveness.

Finally, I will call your attention to the self-esteem data. M^+ and F^+ showed their usual positive correlations with our self-esteem measure, particularly with M^+ . As for the negative scales, M^- was unrelated to self-esteem, and the F^- scales were significantly related to self-esteem in a negative direction.

Acting Out and Neurotic Behavior

In addition to determining the correlations between positive and negative scales, we explored the implications of the patterns of positive and negative scales for two types of problem behaviors. The first of these might be described as emotional and neurotic in nature (anxiety, depression, dissatisfaction with one's life, etc.). The second concerned acting out behaviors such as use of alcohol and other drugs, lying, cheating,

theft, and verbal and physical fighting. Our expectations were most clear in the case of the M scales. We predicted that of all the scales, M^+ (socially desirable instrumentality) would be most strongly correlated, in a negative direction, with neurotic problems, i.e., in both men and women, those exhibiting the most emotional difficulties of this type would be low in positive instrumentality. We anticipated that the correlation with acting out behaviors would be highest with M^- , this time in a positive direction. Thus, we predicted that those exhibiting acting out behavior would be high in negative masculinity.

In order to assess the incidence of neurotic and acting out behaviors, the subjects completed a 39-item questionnaire which asked them to estimate the frequency with which they exhibited certain acting out or sociopathic behaviors during one or more periods of their lives (grade school, high school, college) and to report their contemporaneous life satisfaction, neurotic problems, and seeking of professional help for emotional problems. The items were presented on a 5-point Likert scale with one endpoint indicating low incidence of the behavior and the other endpoint indicating high incidence. For purposes of data reduction, a single Acting Out score and a single Neuroticism score was found for each subject by summing item scores. Since both sets of scores--particularly Acting Out scores--were skewed, raw scores were subjected to a z-transformation and subsequent analyses based on these transformed scores.

Examination of the correlations between the EPA scales and Neuroticism scores showed that for both sexes, the positive scales, M^+ and F^+ were negatively correlated with neuroticism, and the negative scales, M^- , F_C^- ,

and F_{VA}^- were positively correlated with neuroticism. As predicted, the strongest association was with M^+ : r 's of $-.53$ and $-.41$ for males and females respectively. The second strongest association was with F_{VA}^- : r 's of $+.33$ and $+.31$.

To examine the joint contribution of the EPAQ scales to neuroticism, male and female subjects were each divided into three groups on the basis of neuroticism scores: those falling into the upper quarter, middle half, and lower quarter of their respective distribution. Multivariate analyses of variance were then conducted with the data for the three neuroticism groups, using the five EPAQ scales as the dependent variables. The multivariate F 's turned out to be highly significant (p 's $< .00001$).

Slide 3

Means and univariate F 's for each scale are shown in the next slide. Three of the five univariate F 's are significant in each sex. Inspection of the pattern of means reveals that the high neuroticism males are reliably lowest in M^+ and highest in F_{VA}^- and F_C^- , with a nonsignificant elevation in M^- . High neurotic females are also lowest in M^+ (and nonsignificantly lowest on F^+) and highest on the three negative scales. However, in this instance the results of M^- are highly significant while those for F_C^- are not. It is possible that the presence of negative cross-sex-typed characteristics is more consistent with psychopathology than the manifestation of sex-congruent negative attributes.

A final analysis was undertaken in which subjects were classified above or below the median on M^+ and F_{VA}^- , the two scales showing the

strongest correlations in each sex. [For this purpose the (rounded) mean of the medians of males and females on each scale was used as the cutting point.] The percentage of subjects in each neuroticism group showing the most negative constellation (low M^+ , high F_{VA}^-) was computed. For males the low M^+ , high F_{VA}^- pattern was found in 4% of the low neuroticism group, 17% of the medium, and 47% of the high. The comparable figures for females were 20% low, 35% medium, and 61% high.

Parallel types of analyses were done for the Acting Out scores. Correlational analyses showed stronger relationships in males than in females. As anticipated, the strongest relationship was found in both sexes with M^- : r 's of .26 and .18 for males and females respectively. Next highest was F_{VA}^- : r 's of .22 and .09. For males, but not females, significant r 's were also found between Acting out and F^+ (in a negative direction) and F_C^- (in a positive direction).

To determine the joint contributions of the EPAQ scales, males and females were divided into three Acting Out groups (upper quarter, middle half, and lower quarter of their respective distributions). Multivariate analyses of the EPAQ data were highly significant ($p < .001$).

Slide 4

Means and the results of univariate analyses are shown in the next slide. It may be seen that groups are elevated significantly on M^- and F_{VA}^- in each sex. A similar linear pattern is also found on F_C^- but is significant only in females.

The subjects were also classified as being above or below the median on M^- and F_{VA}^- , the scales most strongly associated with Acting Out. The same procedure used in the neuroticism analysis was employed and the percentage of high M^- , high F_{VA}^- subjects in each Acting Out group computed. In males, 63% of the high Acting Out group showed the high negative M and F constellation while only 30% of the moderate and 27% of the low groups were so classified. In females, the figures were 55% for high, 45% for medium and 35% for low.

Conclusions

The investigation of the undesirable sex-related attributes operationalized in the negative PAQ scales adds additional information to the already existing body of knowledge concerning psychological masculinity and femininity. The lack of correlation between the negative PAQ scales and their positive counterparts indicates that they are indeed tapping unique aspects of masculinity and femininity. In addition, the lack of correlation with self-esteem found for the negative masculinity scales and the negative correlations with self-esteem for the negative femininity scales are in sharp contrast to the positive correlations obtained for the positive PAQ scales.

The multivariate analyses performed with respect to neuroticism indicate that the most important factor for predicting neuroticism for both males and females was low M^+ . The most important scale for discriminating between high and low acting out groups was high M^- . In both types of problem behaviors F_{VA}^- also contributed, for both males and females high F_{VA}^- being

associated with high levels of the behavior. The analyses of certain conjoint distributions of scales revealed the importance of the low M^+ , high F_{VA}^- constellations for high neuroticism and the importance of the high M^- , high F_{VA}^- configuration for high acting out.

Table 1
Items on the M^- , F_C^- , and F_{VA}^- Scales

Note: Items are set up on a 5-point scale with the labels shown below at one extreme and negations (e.g., Not at all arrogant) at the other.

M^-	F_C^-
1. Very arrogant	1. Very spineless
2. Very boastful	2. Very servile
3. Very egotistical	3. Very gullible
4. Very greedy	4. Subordinates oneself to others
5. Very dictatorial	
6. Very cynical	
7. Looks out only for self, unprincipled	F_{VA}^-
8. Very hostile	1. Very whiny
	2. Very complaining
	3. Very fussy
	4. Nags a lot

Table 2
Correlations of EPAQ and Self-esteem
Measures in Males and Females

Note: Males are above the diagonal and females are below.

	M ⁺	F ⁺	M ⁻	F _{VA} ⁻	F _C ⁻	Self-esteem
M ⁺		.14	.12	-.28	-.38	.66
F ⁺	.09		-.33	-.09	.07	.23
M ⁻	.10	-.27		.40	-.09	.02
F _{VA} ⁻	-.29	-.14	.45		.28	-.16
F _C ⁻	-.30	.15	-.14	.07		-.40
Self-esteem	.68	.20	.00	-.30	-.25	

Table 3
Means on EPAQ Scales for High, Medium and Low Neurotic
Groups of Each Sex and $\bar{F}_s$ for Univariate ANOVAs

	Males				Females			
	Low	Medium	High	$\bar{F}$	Low	Medium	High	$\bar{F}$
M ⁺	25.41	21.95	18.88	34.80**	22.63	20.50	17.87	33.38**
F ⁺	22.39	21.71	21.49	< 1	24.69	24.43	23.87	1.13
M ⁻	13.12	13.33	14.53	1.62	10.81	12.36	13.47	9.39*
F _{VA} ⁻	4.10	5.01	6.98	15.96**	5.55	6.42	7.53	14.88**
F _C ⁻	5.39	6.46	7.09	6.87*	7.27	7.17	7.40	< 1

* p < .001

** p < .00001

Table 4
Means on EPAQ Scales for High, Medium and Low Acting Out
Groups of Each Sex and F's for Univariate ANOVAs

	Males				Females			
	Low	Medium	High	<u>F</u>	Low	Medium	High	<u>F</u>
M ⁺	21.94	22.32	21.70	< 1	21.33	19.93	20.54	3.06
F ⁺	22.81	21.67	21.24	2.17	24.58	24.24	24.32	< 1
M ⁻	12.36	13.20	15.94	11.43***	11.51	11.85	13.62	6.06**
F _{VA} ⁻	4.73	4.84	6.58	8.68***	5.95	6.42	6.98	3.07*
F _C ⁻	6.24	6.42	6.52	< 1	7.23	7.03	7.76	3.10*

* p < .05

** p < .01

** p < .001